AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently Amended) An in-vehicle hands-free apparatus for making a hands-free call using a telephone ~~in a car~~, the hands-free call being a telephone communication between a user of the in-vehicle hands-free apparatus at one end of the telephone communication and a party on another end of the telephone communication, said in-vehicle hands-free apparatus comprising:

a storage unit operable to store a voice of ~~a~~ the party on the other end of the telephone communication between the user and the party ~~the hands-free call~~ uttered during ~~said call~~ the telephone communication between the user and the party;

a situation analysis unit operable to analyze a surrounding situation of the ~~car~~ vehicle based on information outputted from at least one sensor for detecting the surrounding situation;

an action determination unit operable to ~~determine an action on~~ switch a state of the call between a user of the telephone and the party by selecting either a call state in which output of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication is enabled or a hold state in which the output of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication is suspended, based on a result of the analysis of the situation analysis unit; and

a playback output unit operable, when the action determination unit switches the state of the call from the hold state to the call state after switching from the call state to the hold state, to: (a) continue suspending the output of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication and play back the voice of the party that was stored in the storage unit after the state of the call was switched to the hold state by the action determination unit; ~~based on the action determined by the action determination unit~~ and (b) thereafter enable the output ~~said~~ of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication for the user.

2-3.   (Canceled).

4.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim ~~3~~1,

wherein the playback output unit ~~plays~~ is further operable to play back the voice of the party stored in the storage unit, starting from a section of said voice stored at a point of time before the action determination unit switches the state of the call from the call state to the hold state.

5.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim 4,

wherein the playback output unit ~~plays~~ is operable to play back the voice of the party stored in the storage unit, starting from a break of syllables in said voice.

6.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim ~~3~~1,

wherein the playback output unit includes:

a hold time measurement unit operable to measure a hold time from a point of time when the action determination unit switches the state of the call from the call state to the hold state until a point of time when the action determination unit switches the state of the call from the hold state to the call state; and

a playback control unit operable to determine not to play back the voice of the party stored in the storage unit in a case where the hold time measured by the hold time measurement unit is shorter than a predetermined threshold.

7.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim ~~3~~1,

wherein the playback output unit includes a playback speed control unit operable to control a playback speed of the voice of the party stored in the storage unit.

8.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim 7,

wherein the playback output unit further includes an elapsed time measurement unit operable to measure a time which has elapsed since the action determination unit switched the state of the call from the call state to the hold state, and

the playback speed control unit ~~plays~~ is operable to play back the voice of the party stored in the storage unit at a speed faster than a normal speed in a case where the elapsed time measured by the elapsed time measurement unit is equal to or longer than a

predetermined threshold.

9.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim 3̶1, further comprising:

a first message generation unit operable to generate, when the action determination unit switches the state of the call from the call state to the hold state, a voice delivery message notifying that the voice of the party uttered during the hold state including a point of time of the switching is delivered to the user; and

a sending unit operable to send the voice delivery message to a communication apparatus of the party.

10.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the first message generation unit is further generates operable to generate a hold message notifying that the action determination unit has switched the state of the call from the call state to the hold state and a hold cancellation message notifying that the action determination unit has switched the state of the call from the hold state to the call state, and

the sending unit sends is operable to send the hold message to the communication apparatus of the party the instant that the action determination unit has switched the state of the call from the call state to the hold state, and sends to send the hold cancellation message to the communication apparatus of the party the instant that the action determination unit has switched the state of the call from the hold state to the call state.

11.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein the sending unit sends is operable to send the voice delivery message and the hold message to the communication apparatus of the party repeatedly until the playback output unit ends the playback of the voice of the party stored in the storage unit.

12.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim 3̶1, further comprising a second message generation unit operable to generate a playback message notifying that the playback of the voice of the party stored in the storage unit is

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to be started,

wherein the playback output unit ~~plays~~ is operable to play back the playback message and ~~outputs~~ output said playback message for the user before starting the playback of said voice.

13.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim 12,

wherein the second message generation unit is further ~~generates~~ operable to generate a hold message notifying that the action determination unit has switched the state of the call from the call state to the hold state and a hold cancellation message notifying that the action determination unit has switched the state of the call from the hold state to the call state, and

the playback output unit ~~outputs~~ is operable to output the hold message for the user the instant that the action determination unit has switched the state of the call from the call state to the hold state, and ~~outputs~~ to output the hold cancellation message for the user the instant that the action determination unit has switched the state of the call from the hold state to the call state.

14.   (Currently Amended) The in-vehicle hands-free apparatus according to Claim 1,

wherein the storage unit has a storage area divided into a plurality of areas for storing the voice of the party uttered during the call, and

said voice of the party is divided into sections and stored in the plurality of areas so that the divided sections of the voice partly overlap ~~partly~~ each other.

15.   (Currently Amended) A hands-free call method for making a hands-free call using a telephone in a ~~car~~ vehicle, the hands-free call being a telephone communication between a user of the in-vehicle hands-free apparatus at one end of the telephone communication and a party on another end of the telephone communication, said hands-free call method comprising:

a recording step of recording a voice of ~~a~~ the party on the other end of the telephone communication between the user and the party uttered during the telephone communication between the user and the party ~~hands-free call during said call~~;

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a situation analysis step of analyzing a surrounding situation of the ~~ear~~ vehicle based on information outputted from at least one sensor for detecting the surrounding situation;

an action determination step of switching a state of the call between a user of the telephone and the party by selecting either a call state in which ~~a call can be made~~ output of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication is enabled or a hold state in which ~~a call cannot be made~~ output of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication is suspended, based on a result of the analysis in the situation analysis step; and

a playback output step of, when the state of the call is switched from the hold state to the call state after being switched from the call state to the hold state in the action determination step: (a) continuing suspending the output of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication and playing back the voice of the party that was recorded in the recording step after the state of the call was switched to the hold state by the action determination step; and (b) thereafter enabling outputting ~~said~~ of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication for the user ~~when the state of the call is switched from the hold state to the call state after being switched from the call state to the hold state in the action determination step~~.

16. (Original) The hands-free call method according to Claim 15,

wherein in the playback output step, the voice of the party recorded in the recording step is played back, starting from a section of said voice stored at a point of time before the state of the call is switched from the call state to the hold state in the action determination step.

17. (Original) The hands-free call method according to Claim 15,

wherein the playback output step includes:

a hold time measurement substep of measuring a hold time from a point of time when the state of the call is switched from the call state to the hold state until a point of time when the state of the call is switched from the hold state to the call state in the action determination step; and

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a playback control substep of determining not to play back the voice of the party recorded in the recording step in a case where the hold time measured in the hold time measurement substep is shorter than a predetermined threshold.

18.   (Original) The hands-free call method according to Claim 15,

wherein the playback output step includes:

a playback speed control substep of controlling a playback speed of the voice of the party recorded in the recording step; and

an elapsed time measurement substep of measuring a time which has elapsed since the state of the call was switched from the call state to the hold state in the action determination step, and

in the playback speed control step, the voice of the party is played back at a speed faster than normal speed in a case where the elapsed time measured in the elapsed time measurement substep is equal to or longer than a predetermined threshold.

19.   (Original) The hands-free call method according to Claim 15, further comprising:

a first message generation step of generating, when the state of the call is switched from the call state to the hold state in the action determination step, a voice delivery message notifying that the voice of the party uttered during the hold state including a point of time of the switching is delivered to the user; and

a sending step of sending the voice delivery message to a communication apparatus of the party.

20.   (Original) The hands-free call method according to Claim 15, further comprising a second message generation step of generating a playback message notifying that the playback of the voice of the party recorded in the recording step is to be started,

wherein in the playback output step, the playback message is played back and outputted for the user before the playback of said voice is started.

21.   (Currently Amended) A program for an in-vehicle hands-free apparatus for making a hands-free call using a telephone in a ~~car~~vehicle, the hands-free call being a

telephone communication between a user of the in-vehicle hands-free apparatus at one end of the telephone communication and a party on another end of the telephone communication, the program being recorded on a computer-readable medium and causing a computer to execute a method comprising:

a recording step of recording a voice of a~the party on the other end of the telephone communication between the user and the party uttered during the telephone communication between the user and the party~~hands-free call during said call~~;

a situation analysis step of analyzing a surrounding situation of the ~~car~~vehicle based on information outputted from at least one sensor for detecting the surrounding situation;

an action determination step of switching a state of the call between a user of the telephone and the party by selecting either a call state in which output of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication is enabled ~~a call can be made~~or a hold state in which output of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication is suspended~~a call cannot be made~~, based on a result of the analysis in the situation analysis step; and

a playback output step of, when the state of the call is switched from the hold state to the call state after being switched from the call state to the hold state in the action determination step: (a) continuing suspending the output of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication and playing back the voice of the party that was recorded in the recording step after the state of the call was switched to the hold state by the action determination step; and (b) thereafter enabling outputting ~~said~~of the voice of the party on the other end of the telephone communication for the user ~~when the state of the call is switched from the hold state to the call state after being switched from the call state to the hold state in the action determination step~~.